

Opening Salutation by the Minister of Energy & Environment of Greece, Mr. Panos Skourletis, to the “9th SE Europe Energy Dialogue” of IENE

Great changes have to serve real needs and this is why they call for a thorough dialogue. I believe that meetings of this kind, as this one organized by IENE and held under the auspices of the Ministry of Environment, do serve this need. And we indeed have great changes before us in the energy sector, some of which are already taking shape. Certain arrangements have obliged me to stay in Athens, however I am anticipating, with great interest, the views that are going to be presented during these two days, by people who know very well what is really at stake in the field of energy.

Just a few days after the UK referendum on the country's participation in the EU, the challenges for Europe have multiplied in the both the economic and the political field. And as it is often the case, adversities augment also in critical circumstances. Europe has to realize significant structural changes in the energy sector that have already been under way for many years, without, of course, being discouraged by the current economic challenges and the political turmoil.

However, if we have to change things in energy, within the framework of a comprehensive strategy which will contribute to the enhancement of energy security in the EU, we shall indeed change them.

And if we have to face the economic challenges, with a clear, however, perspective towards the future, then we shall do it.

And, last, if we are obliged – and we are – to revive the political vision for a United Europe of the people, then we shall revive it.

We face certain challenges in the energy sector and, at this moment, we are promoting institutional changes - firstly, regarding the new way that the market is going to work, according to the provisions of the target model. In the meantime, we are very soon going to promote a new framework for the support mechanism of RES. In the forthcoming months, investors will be able to make their decisions based on a new clear framework, similar with what is already in force in all the European Union.

Due to time limitations, I shall not refer any further to the significant changes in the domestic energy field or in the progress taking place in hydrocarbon exploration and development. Let me only stress that Greece's becoming an energy hub brings about positive prospects for the future and for investments in energy. TAP is just the beginning.

Thank you.